MINISTRY OF ENERGY (SHRI C. K. JAFFAR SHARIEF): (a) No, Sir.

(b) and (c) Exploratory drilling for establishing the reserves of lignite in Jayamkondacholapuram areas of Tamil Nadu is in progress. The potential for development of a project can be established only after sufficient data becomes available.

Electronic Telephone Exchange in Bhongir, Andhra Pradesh

1945. SHRIMATI RENUKA CHOWDHURY: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Central Government have since sanctioned the setting up of an electronic telephone exchange in Bhongir in Nalgonda District in Andhra Pradesh;

(b) if so, whether the work on this project has since been commenced;

(c) the funds allocated for the purpose; and

(d) by when it is likely to be commissioned?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI GIRIDHAR GOMANGO): (a) Yes, Sir. The orders for equipments for are under placement.

(b) No, Sir.

(c) About Rs. 95 lakhs have been allotted for the purpose.

(d) The exchange is planned to be commissioned by the end of March, 1990 subject to availability of equipment.

Indigenous Supplies for Power Plants

1946. SHRI KAILASH PATI MISHRA: Will the Minister of ENERGY be pleased to state:

(a) the instances in each of the last three years and the current year when Indian bidders (including the BHEL) were disqualified by NIPC on the ground of qualifying requirements, despite their manufacturing capacity and capability and supplies for power stations and orders for allied equipments were awarded to foreign suppliers; and

(b) what steps have been taken by Government to have indigenous supplies from Indian suppliers/manufacturers instead of the foreign ones, and with what results?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF POWER IN THE MINISTRY OF ENERGY (SHRI KALP NATH RAI): (a) The National Thermal Power Corporation (NTPC) have indicated that there are no instances where the Indian bidders were disqualified despite their meeting the qualifying requirements and possessing the requisite manufacturing capacity and capability, as evidenced by past performance, for the supply of power station equipments.

(b) The capabilities of the Indian manufacturers are kept in view by the NTPC at the stage of finalization of the qualifying requirements for the prospective bidders. In the case of World Bank-assisted projects, the indigenous bidders are eligible for a 15 per cent price preference. The Indian contractors have secured 81.7 per cent of the total value of orders placed upto August, 1988 through the international competitive bidding procedure.

Payment of Bonus to ED employees

1947. SHRI LAL K. ADVANI: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) the amount of bonus paid previously to ED employees during the last three years, yearwise and that paid during the current year and what is the basis of calculation thereof; and

(b) whether during talks with Unions, bonus on the basis of actual pay of the category was assured, if not, what are the reasons therefor and if so what follow up action has been taken thereon?